

Can We Just Leave It?

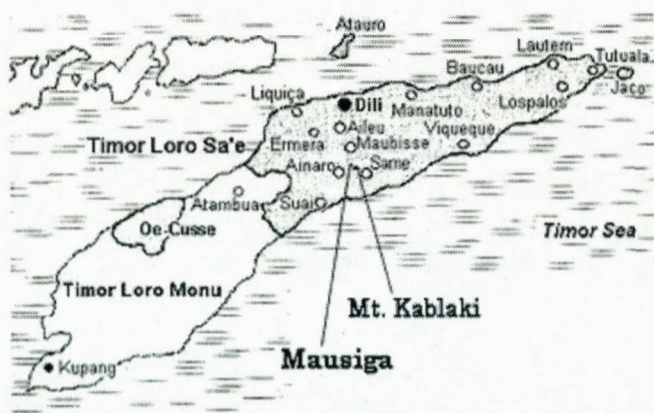
Aoyama Morito

[lian INGLES] *Aoyama Morito*

Totally Deformed Village, Maugisa

When Indonesian army invaded East Timor, Olga da Silva Amaral run away into the bush with her family. She was captured by Indonesian troops with her brother four years later. She and her brother were forced to move to Maubisse. She could study at junior high school for a short time. Later, she married and moved to her husband's village called Maugisa (Mauchiga, Mauxiga) located at a mountainside of Mt. Kablaki. In 1982 July or August, Indonesian army started a huge military operation here at Maugisa.

At the place where Mt. Kablaki is seen quite well on front of us, Captain Tara — ex-FALINTIL commander at "Região IV", at present the captain of FALINTIL-FDTL of the first battalion — explains "there is Maugisa over there. In 1982, Indonesian totally changed this village," with pointing the approximate whereabouts of Maugisa. Captain Tara is from this village. According to him, the then number of population was about 1,000 (or about 1,500) and some of villagers were killed, some were taken to the Atauro Island as prisoners and others had to run away into the bush.



Horrible Experience Of Olga

Olga (left) and her family



Olga was arrested by Indonesian troops and was tortured/raped extremely. In 1981 she was already supporting FALINTIL by producing food. Meanwhile Capt. Tara was, at that moment, a young organizer of FRETILIN in this village. After Indonesian army started the military operation, he ran into the bush and joined FALINTIL. But his father was taken to Atauro Island and died there.

It is obvious to me that Olga and Capt. Tara are comrades to resist against Indonesian occupation. And also they seem to be a kind of relative. He arranged for us to stay at Olga's house and he behaves himself so comfortably as if he were at home. This behaviour of the commander reminds me of that of Nino Konis Santa and Taur Matan Ruak at their hiding houses during the guerrilla war.

Today is the very first day of the year 2004. Marito — my host family in Dili — and I are eating a homemade cake with drinking a coffee, and we are asking Olga about Mausiga in 1982. Olga, standing in front of us and folding her arms with leaning slightly on the wall, looks more attractive, intellectual and elegant than herself I saw at the hall of CAVR (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste) or on T.V. in April last year.

"You were testifying at the public hearing of CAVR, weren't you?" I ask, and she says, "Yes. I talked about the punishment." She was hit with a chair, she was covered with her own blood, she threw up and she was given electric shocks ----- here she tells with using light gestures.

Among ladies who testified at CAVR in last April, I remember Olga cried the most strongly.

One month after Indonesian troops started the military operation at Mausiga, Olga was captured and taken to the military post. And this is the example of her horrible experience -----;

"At the time only women were detained at the Dare Military Command Post. We

were tortured one by one by ABRI and Hansip [Civilian Guard]. Before I was raped, they hit me in the head with a wooden chair until I bled, I was hit with a firearm in my left ribcage until it was injured, I was kicked in the back with military boots until I was unable to walk. But the torture continued. I was given electric shocks to my ears, hands, and feet. I jumped all over until I felt that my blood no longer flowed and I had no more strength. This is when they raped me. After I was raped I was burned on my face and hands with a cigarette butt. They tortured me like this for a month. Every day I was ordered to wash the army's clothing and cook. They also forced me to wear an ABRI uniform. I was given a backpack, a radio (like a walky-talky), a pistol, and ammunition so that I would operate with them when they went into the Kablaki Mountain forest to search for FALINTIL commanders. On Kablaki Mountain I was handed over to ABRI troops on duty there and was then raped."

(CAVR, Public Hearing, Women and Conflict, 28-29 April 2003)

Olga ran away once, but she was arrested at school in September of this year and taken to the military command in Ainaro. There she was -----;

"There I was taken to a bedroom and raped by a Military Intelligence Officer. After that there a different intelligence officer interrogated me: 'Have you ever given food to FALINTIL? Is your house a meeting place for FALINTIL?' Because I kept denying their accusations they tortured me. At first they tried to persuade me, touching me from head to toe before they began to hit me in the head with a wooden chair. Blood ran down my face onto my shirt until I was covered with blood. They also put an electric cable in my ear and gave me electric shocks to the inside of my ear. They also gave electric shocks to my hands and feet. Each time they threw a question at me, I was burned with a cigarette butt or given electric shocks. When my strength was all gone, I was raped. They took me to a WC where I was held for three months. When they used the toilet, I went outside. Whether they defecated or urinated, they never flushed. That is where was I slept and ate. I was given food once a day in a small condensed milk can. Drinking water was also put in that can. While I was held in the WC I was never allowed to bathe or change clothes."

(also, CAVR, Public Hearing, Women and Conflict, 28-29 April 2003)

"How was the food?" I question to her, and she replies "só milho" as most people with the experience of prisoner. "Só" means "only" and "milho" means "maize" in Portuguese. She tells us "I was detained in WC" and then she starts to be moved to

tears.

Marito has been asking questions to her, too, as Timorese, but when he sees her tearful, he stops asking. Maybe he thinks he shouldn't hurt her. I stop, too. Silence reigns in the room for a moment. Marito himself saw many people just dying in the mountain in the late of 1970s. "We have to take some times for asking these things," Marito says to me later.

East Timor In 1980s

In the latter half of 1970s, before/after Indonesia started to invade East Timor, in Japan it was not rare that East Timor appeared in the front page of newspapers and East Timor was treated as international affairs. During this period, East Timor was internationally paid attention along with Portuguese colonized African countries' movements.

The overwhelming military power of Indonesia, however, let the news media not talk about the independence of East Timor. In 1979, the malnutrition of "the defeated pro-independent guerrilla's refugees" (*Asahi Shinbun*, 1979 December 27) and the humanitarian aids to refugees turned to be focused. And then East Timor was beginning to be treated as if it were annexed to Indonesia. Since then East Timor was not treated as international affairs although every year the annexation of East Timor to Indonesian was denied by the United Nations.

On the other hand, if we look at the inside of East Timor, there occurred the very historical event to the struggle for the national liberation in 1981 — that was the conference known as "National Assembly." In this conference the leaders of the struggle took another look at their own struggle and decided the direction in which people participated in the struggle. Then CRRN (Conselho Revolucionário da Resistência Nacional) was established and Xanana Gusmão became its president and the commander in chief of FALINTIL. This was the new resistance-system for East Timor which was defeated militarily/temporarily in 1970s.

As we know, CRRN turned to be CNRM (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere) in 1988 and CNRM turned to be CNRT (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense) in 1998. In other words, it can be said that the basis of East Timor as a nation began to be created in 1981.

The large scale military action that Olga and Capt. Tara experienced occurred one year after CRRN was established. And there were other huge military operations in East Timor that was getting to be more isolated from the international communities even though the new resistance-system was established.

Indonesian force concluded a cease-fire agreement to FALINTIL in March 1983, but actually Indonesian just tried to talk FALINTIL into stopping the resistance. We can see from this fact that people of East Timor never gave up fighting in spite of isolation. When Indonesian force knew this tactics didn't work, — it may get mad — it began the further destructive military operations. When I met the highly sophisticated commander of FALINTIL David Alex in the forest, he told me "in Viqueque and Karalas, villagers — children, old people or women, whoever you were — were called and shot to death by Indonesian force. Later, in 1984 and 85, the enemy controlled the whole population and destroyed Lospalos."

In the west part of East Timor "Indonesian totally changed this village" at Mausiga, and in the east part "the enemy controlled the whole population and destroyed Lospalos." From those expressions, we can see that Indonesian military operations in the first half of 1980s were huge. Nevertheless, FALINTIL was not beaten. People continued to support guerrillas in spite of tortures or massacres. Therefore Indonesian military had to change its strategy — from a large scale operation into the "regional anti-guerrilla strategy" by the elite special forces. That was from 1986 to 1988.

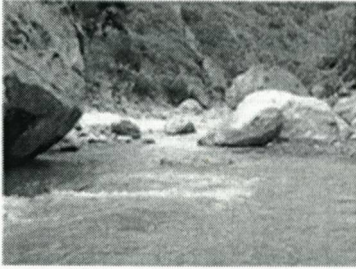
In 1989 President Soeharto opened the part of East Timor for foreigners. Then, foreigners could visit East Timor as 27th province of Indonesia as tourists. When the Pope visited East Timor in the same year, the young people of East Timor tried to appeal to the world to be free and their appearances became international news. This action encouraged other resistance people. Clandestine members began to be organized well with supporting FALINTIL. And their network began to be connected to the solidarity groups outside of East Timor. Thus, the information got to be coming out from East Timor more easily.

I have just summarized the 1980s, in which Mausiga was totally attacked by Indonesian force. I can realize again how isolated East Timor was during this period. As I've just written here, I understand the development of the struggle for liberation and the conversion of Indonesian strategy. But I do not understand how people of East Timor suffered or what kind of tragedy or heroic story they had during this period. I think this period was not told enough, nor written enough in detail.

I just can't imagine its scene although I hear Olga, Capt. Tara and other villagers about the tragedy of Mausiga. Maybe the beautiful scenery of Mausiga in front of me prevents myself from imagining it.

I do wish people of East Timor would rouse themselves into writing and recording the 1980s of their own country by themselves. And I do wish their writing would help a person without imagination like me to imagine the scene of this period of East Timor.

Different Suffering Of Each One



the stream with big rocks

Mausiga belongs to Ainaro District which is a mountainous region. Although we can get a fine view at the local town of this district Maubisse, we can't here at Mausiga. The view is obstructed with high mountains in front of us. Wherever you go, you have to go up or go down.

If you go up to the right in the lane in front of Olga's house, you go to Dare. If you go down to the left, you reach to the school, seeing the bridge and the stream at your left side. The stream is strong. Beside the stream, here and there, we can see big rocks with sharp edges. The sharp edges of rocks keep me away from my familiar sense of hearing of the stream. It sounds differently from I hear in my country Japan.

By the way, how does Olga feel her experience of tortures and humiliations, which were so much extreme? "Now war is over. There are no soldiers that hurt you. How do you feel the trauma? How about your emotional wound?" I ask her. She looks wondering about my question. I ask again, "East Timor is liberated. Are you also liberated?" She looks understanding. She nods, "Ah." But still it looks difficult for her to answer. I don't want to limit my question, but I try to make myself understood for her — "Do you want to appeal the compensation for the postwar or the responsibility for the war to your government or the international community?" She replies, "Our government? What can our government do?" laughing in self-deprecation along with Marito. And she says, "It depends on our government. But we can't do anything because the government doesn't do anything."

I am wondering if Olga is eager to search investigation of the responsibility for the invasion or if Olga is eager to make clear who is blame to about her horrible experience. Supposed that she is, I am wondering if she just doesn't know what to do or ----- I never know the inside of her mind. Marito is right. Just one night to stay is too short to know.

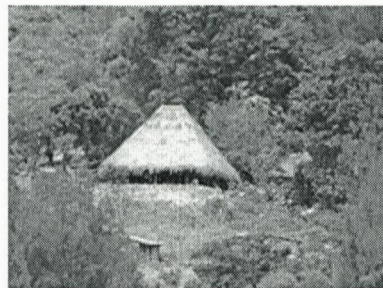
She may read my mind — I am not satisfied with her answer — then she says to me, "First of all, I can feel a peace because there are no military to violate us and there is no war. I'm happy day by day." At last they got a peace. At last they got out of the horrible situation in which they could be tortured, killed or raped by the invaders at any time. It is quite natural for her or anybody to say this.

And Olga adds, — "All Timorese have been suffering. But each of people has own suffering. How to suffer is different." Marito is nodding to her. He seems impressed with

her expression. I am also impressed. Her expression indicates two important factors. The first is to take a look at East Timor as a whole. East Timor was abducted and confined by Indonesian force. It could be said People of East Timor were imprisoned in their homeland and we could say a lot of "*Massacres of East Timor*" or a lot of "*Tragedies of East Timor*" occurred. The second is to take a closer look at East Timor internally. There are various sufferings, depending on each of East Timorese, just like its natural sceneries are full of variety and just like there is the complicated linguistic situation in which there are over 30 languages. These two points of view are essential when we try to take a good look at this country.

Japanese Troops Were Also Stationed at Mausiga

a common house with a straw-thatched roof in this district

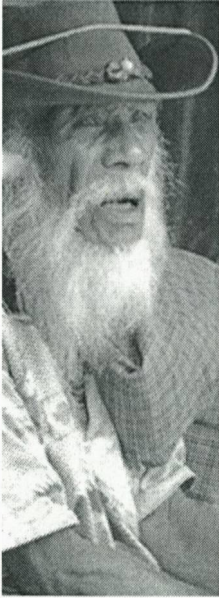


Olga's house looks small. There are three or four rooms and they are all small. But this house is just main house. Olga's house as a whole is not as small as it looks. Besides the main house, there is a kitchen house with a straw-thatched roof, which is as big as the main house. We can see many houses with a straw-thatched roof in this district. The premises of this house are surrounded with pastoral fences. There is a hut with two WCs, away from the center of the premises if you walk 5m in the narrow road between pastoral fences. Clothes are put on the fences. Are they already washed or waiting for being washed? The courtyard is formed being surrounded with the fences, the main house and the kitchen house. Olga, Capt. Tara and villagers are standing with talking and taking a cup of coffee and a cake in the courtyard. The courtyard seems to play a role as a living room.

Among villagers, there is an old man with white beard, sitting under the eaves of the kitchen house. He used to be a chief of the village. As soon as he knows I am Japanese, he starts to tell about Japanese troops. Capt. Tara is an interpreter. "Here were Japanese troops. When they came, Australian troops ran away. They stayed around here for about three years. They set up camp up over there and they were farming."

How many Japanese soldiers were there, between 50 and 60 or between 100 and

200? He can't recall how many, but he remembers, "there were many." He says Japanese troops were farming. Did they take food away from villagers? His answer is no. "They didn't rob villagers of anything." "They didn't kill anybody." "Their behaviour to villagers was not bad." I ask him whether the villagers of Mausiga helped Japanese troops or Australian? His answer is that some helped Japanese and some helped Australian. And he says, "We didn't have any weapons. We had to react not to be killed."



**the man
talking about
Japanese
troops**

Is this ex-chief of the village reacting me as a Japanese not to make me upset? Is he just trying to be nice to a Japanese in front of him. I think not. Because the interpreter is Capt. Tara who is still respected by people, I believe the old man is sincerely recalling his memory.

Even though the ex-chief doesn't have a bad image to Japanese troops that stationed here for about three years during World War II, the occupation of Timor Island by Japanese armed forces for three and half years was historically the fact of invasion. The occupation forced Timorese people to lose a lot of properties and lives. That is also the fact. But any authorities haven't precisely investigated its damages and casualties yet. In other words, Japan never settled its occupation. Japan just leaves it. Not only leaving it but also assisting U.S.A. financially with invading East Timor indirectly through the Soeharto dictatorship of Indonesia. Japan, along with U.S.A. and European

majors, ignored the reality of massacres or tortures in East Timor as much as possible. This criminal act brought East Timor the tragedy — as Olga's saying, "All Timorese have been suffering. But each of people has own suffering. How to suffer is different."

In order to overcome the unhappy past and become future-oriented together, as far as the relationship between East Timor and Japan is concerned, we have to know how people of East Timor were/are suffering and why, from the both side of Japan and East Timor. What Japanese troops had done to East Timor and what Japan have done to East Timor through Indonesian troops — at least these facts have to be revealed, otherwise the relationship between Japan and East Timor couldn't be future-oriented. But actually what we call "support" — sending money and Japanese Self-Defense Force to East Timor — is just concealing the past, making the relationship of two countries backward-oriented. The same thing can be said to the relationship between East Timor and Indonesia / Portugal / Australia / European majors.

Leaders of East Timor are so defenseless for "aid-strategy" by majors, such as

financial support for the construction of nation and the military deployment for the security. Their defenselessness shut people's sufferings in people's bodies and souls. In this situation people can't show their abilities for the construction of democratic country. This is a pitiful situation.

Meanwhile, if we look at the situation in Japan, Japanese government never mentioned the responsibility for the matters that Japanese troops invaded East Timor and Japan assisted U.S.A. financially with invading East Timor through Indonesia. The government is making use of the case of East Timor for sending Self-Defense Force abroad including Iraq, just following U.S.A. and trying to change the Constitution for the worse. I think the now-or-never situation for the peace movement of Japan is coming.

Definitely We Can't Just Leave It

It is cool up here at Mausiga not like the capital Dili down there, and we need a shirt with long sleeves even in the daytime. When night is falling, it's getting cooler and cooler, and I have to change short pants into long ones. Instead of long pants, I use a long and thick pair of socks like worn by a football player. I find them just suitable for this climate. And I find lightning bugs when it gets dark. They call this bug "derumuka"(or "delumuka" ?) in their language. In Japan I used to see plenty of them in summer season, but not any more. The light from lightning bugs and the sound of a stream make me quite comfortable.

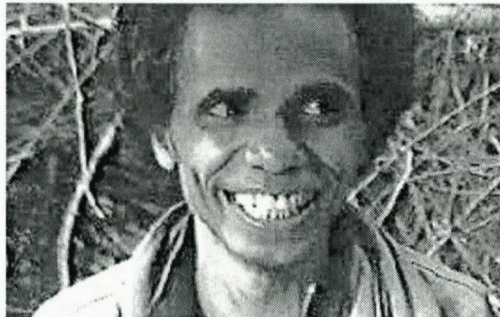
We have a supper around at 8 o'clock and go to bed at 10 o'clock. Capt. Tara is still talking to someone in whispers in the darkness. A whispered conversation reminds me of guerrilla war. War is over now. He whispers because everybody else is sleeping, not because the enemy may listen to him. I share a bed with Capt. Tara. This reminds me of guerrilla war, too. I shared a bed with Commander David Alex and Taur Matan Ruak during the war. Now when we are asleep, we don't have to worry about the enemy's attack. We don't have to worry about mosquito's attack, either. There are no mosquitos at the low temperature. We just have to think about trying not to catch a cold.

In the morning, after we breakfast, when we are leaving this village, Olga is saying, "till the day I see you again." Children are standing besides her. After her horrible experience, because her reproductive organs might have been damaged, she couldn't be pregnant, after all she got pregnant, but she gave birth with extreme difficulty. Now her children are growing up. With the memory of the large scale military operation of Indonesia at Mausiga, Olga is saying that she is feeling peaceful and happy day by day because war is over.

But can we just leave East Timor's suffering as a whole and individual suffering like Olga's? Can we just leave who caused it, how and why?

To avoid the same tragedy happening someday and somewhere in the world, and as a Japanese, to prevent Japan from going for the wrong way again, I think definitely we can't just leave it.

David Alex, the commander of FALINTIL



“in Viqueque and Karalas, villagers — children, old people or women, whoever you were — were called and shot to death by Indonesian force. Later, in 1984 and 85, the enemy controlled the whole population and destroyed Lospalos”

